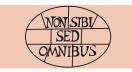


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### 530 NEWLY-ENROLLED STUDENTS ATTENDED THE START OF THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR



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### FOR THE FIRST TIME A 3D LIFE DEMONSTRATION OF ROBOTIC



SURGERY WAS PART THE XI EUROPEAN **CONGRESS OF SURGERY IN SOFIA** 





WHY IS BULGARIA IN THE TOP 3 WORLD-WIDE IN THE FIELD *ROBOTIC SURGERY?* p. 4

AN INTERVIEW

WITH PROF. GRIGOR GORCHEV





STUDENTS AND LECTURERS FROM MU-PLEVEN TOOK PART IN THE EUROPEAN **RESEARCHERS' NIGHT, 2019** 

# THE START OF THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR omber 9th after the AT MU-PLEVEN Academic Affairs

On September 9th, after the successful student candidate campaign of 2019, the start of the new academic year at MU-Pleven was celebrated in the Magnum auditorium hall. Pleven's Alma Mater welcomed 530 first-year students, accepted in 14 different specialties - 4 master's and 10 bachelor's programs, in the professional fields of medicine, pharmacy, health care and public health.

The official guests at the ceremony were the management of MU – Pleven; the Head of the local government administration, Miroslav Petrov; Dr. Penka Stefanova - Director of RHIF – Pleven; Dr. Ivan Yordanov, Director of BFSA – Pleven; Ivayla Petrova - Head nurse of UMHAT 'Dr. G. Stranski' - Pleven. The first year students were also welcomed and congratulated in an address by the Vice-Rector for





Academic Affairs, Prof. M. Alexandrova.

This year among the most excellent freshmen, with a perfect score of 36.00 points, were Krassimir Velikov, Eli Ilieva and Ivana Ivanova. They responded to the greetings, pointing out the reasons for their choice to study at MU-Pleven.

The newly admitted students observed the long-established ritual and took an academic oath, which made them morally committed to the basic values and missions of the University as well as to the Code of Ethics and the best academic traditions and practices.

The ceremony was concluded with a musical greeting from the Municipality Choir.

# THE 11TH CONGRESS ON ROBOTIC SURGERY – SERGS 2019 WAS HELD IN SOFIA, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF MU-PLEVEN



From 26 to 28 September 2019, the XI European Congress on Robotic Surgery was held at Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski'. For the first time, Bulgaria was the host of a high-ranking medical forum, thanks to the efforts and under the auspices of Medical University - Pleven. The congress was held under the motto

"Beyond Borders" with the underlying message of "jumping over the boundaries" of standard thinking, classical medicine and conventional surgery.

The forum was held in the Grand Hall of Sofia University and the first address was made by the President of the European Association of Robotic Surgery (SERGS), Prof. Rene Verhayen, who greeted the participants and expressed his delight of the great achievements in education, especially the upgraded curricula over the years which had attracted many young people to this new type of robotic surgery. Emphasizing the advantages of the innovative method for patients, Prof. Rene Verhaegen expressed his expectations of a successful and interesting conference.

Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev, MD, former Rector of MU-Pleven and established specialist in the field of robotic surgery also addressed the audience. Professor Gorchev presented the history of robotic surgery in Bulgaria and its tendencies in recent years and wished the audience a

pleasant and fruitful stay in Sofia.

Prof. Gorchev's expectations of a successful conference were seconded by the address of the Rector of the University of Sofia, Prof. Atanas Gerdzhikov, who expressed gratitude towards the organizers and the participants of the conference for their dedication to robotic surgery and streamlining the organization of a prestigious thought and idea-provoking international forum.

Earlier in the day, a press conference was held at which Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Rector of Medical University - Pleven and a member of the Council of the European Association of Robotic Gynecological Surgery said that the International Congress of Robotic Surgery in Sofia is the realization of his and Prof. Gorchev's long-held



dream. According to Prof. Tomov, Bulgarian medicine deserves more such forums and a leading place on the map of world surgery and further noted that he and his team will not tire of working in this direction.

More than 350 specialists and medical students from all over the world took part in the European Congress of Robotic Surgery SERGS 2019 in Sofia. Plenary lectures were given by leading surgeons from the USA and Europe as well as, for the first time in the European Robotics Forum, the so-called SLS World Team formed from top surgeons of the World Laparoscopic Association.

Information: V.Dukova



# 3D LIFE DEMONSTRATION OF ROBOTIC SURGERY WAS PART OF THE XI EUROPEAN CONGRESS OF ROBOTIC SURGERY IN SOFIA

Medical University - Pleven realized a special demonstration of 3D Live Surgery during the XI European Congress of Robotic Surgery in Sofia. The robot-assisted operation of a 42-year-old patient with cervical cancer was performed by Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev and his team at the University Hospital in Pleven - Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Dr. Desislava Kiprova, Dr. Alexander Lyubenov, Dr. Teodora Semova, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kamelia Tsvetanova – anesthesiologist as well as Nurses Kamelia Ilieva and Ralitsa Hristova. The intervention (robot-assisted radical class III hysterectomy with adnexa and total pelvic lymph dissection) was broadcast and discussed at the congress in Sofia.

Information: V.Dukova





### INTERVIEW WITH PROF. GRIGOR GORCHEV, MEMBER OF CORRESPONDENCE FOR THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, FORMER RECTOR OF MU-PLEVEN



- Professor Gorchev, what should be known when talking about robotic surgery in Bulgaria and how developed is it here?
- We are in the Top 3 in Europe. The reason why is that we started practicing this type of intervention in our country very early. We are the first in Eastern Europe to embrace the practice. Greece and Turkey started much later. Macedonia and Serbia do not have such opportunities, while Poland is just now at the starting line and so is Hungary. We, on the other hand, already have 11 years of experience behind us.
- How do you determine which patients would undergo robotic surgery and how has this type of intervention developed in recent years?
- I will focus onb the second part of the question first and say that in Pleven we have three robotic systems. One of them is actually the first to be imported to Bulgaria. It is an "E" system, which is



11 years old and has already been "retired". The Americans do not support it, but our system is fully operational and serves to train young specialists in the field of pelvic surgery. We have a system that is only meant for training and, of course, we have the latest generation, which is the pinnacle of modern technology. This is the equipment that is used when working with patients - in gynecological, urological and abdominal surgery. It is most often used for gynecological and urological interventions.

- How are young doctors trained?
- This process is very slow. The results come years later. From next year there will be a training course for thoracic surgery, because, I dare say, robotic surgery has a great future in this direction. This type of surgery is very expensive. I'm talking mainly about paying for the instruments. Here the most important deciding factor would be the State and the Health Insurance Fund.
- How many women have you helped in these 11 years?
- Over 1300 women. We are talking mainly about cervical cancer, ovarian cancer, cancer of the whole uterus. We work mainly on cancer patients, because the main purpose of robotics is in cancer surgery. It is a matter of precise removal of the tumor, the lymph nodes, with almost no blood loss and very rapid post-op recovery.
- What level of quality of life improvement are we talking about in patients undergoing robotic surgery?
- We expect that between the 15th and 20th day post-op people no longer have any problems. The integrity of the abdominal wall is not violated, which is very important. There is no

- postoperative syndrome, no abdominal pain. Many patients are told that we must "open to see." No such thing. Everything is best seen in 3D space.
- How much does a similar procedure cost in the USA and in Bulgaria?
- In the United States, the health funds required from private health insurance could amount to 100,000 dollars. In our country, the Health Insurance Fund pays BGN 8,000. This covers some of the consumables and maintenance of the system, which is very important. We have been working at this price for many years now.
- How many women who have had severe cancer have been able to maintain their reproductive capabilities with robotic surgery?
- We have several such cases. However, everything is very relative. It depends on the severity of the disease and what phase we are intervening in. The women in question must meet certain conditions. But, yes, the fact is that we have women with preserved reproductive abilities. First of all, it is important for us to save the patient's life.
- How many young doctors have gone through training so far?
- I have three teams of young doctors working with me. We invest a lot in young people. Learning and training in robotic surgery is quite difficult, but we progress, develop and eventually succeed.

Kamen Kamenov - Dir.bg

https://m.dir.bg/dnes/obshtestv o/zashto-sme-v-top-3-na-evropa-porobotizirana-hirurgiya-chl-kor-profgrigor-gorchev-pred-dir-bg

## STUDENTS AND LECTURERS FROM MU-PLEVEN SUCCESSFULLY TOOK PART IN THE EUROPEAN RESEARCHERS' NIGHT, 2019



On September 27, students and lecturers from the Medical College at the Medical University - Pleven participated in the European Researchers' Night. The Bulgarian host of the international event, which is held simultaneously on the last Friday of September in about 300 cities across Europe and around the world, was the University of Sofia, 'St. Kliment Ohridski'.

The diverse scientific and entertainment program of the group from MC - Pleven



### cont. from p.4

attracted many visitors of different ages. Herbal therapy, natural cosmetics, tasting, research, photo exhibition, film screenings, and information brochures - a colorful palette of the achievements of future clinical and X-ray technicians, assistant pharmacists, social specialists and experts in medical cosmetics was presented.

The team from MC - Pleven included the lecturers Assoc. Prof. Teodora Valova, Ph.D., Lecturer Krassimira Lisaeva and students from all specialties of the Medical College: Stefan Genev, Georgi Violinov, Mariana Burova, Veselka Hristova, Ekaterina Ladjova, Ani Angelova.

The students from the specialty "Medical Cosmetics" demonstrated the preparation of natural herbal cosmetics for the treatment of the skin of the face and body, as well as for the prevention and treatment of various diseases. Some easy, useful, completely safe and interesting recipes that can be applied at home were presented. Flyers with relevant information were also distributed.

Future medical and X-ray technicians presented the gelatin polysaccharide agar-agar, which is widely used in the food industry, confectionery, medicine and is claimed to rid the body of toxins and harmful accumulations, to normalize liver function and help improve metabolic processes. Along with information about its role in microbiology, its place in modern cuisine, vegan recipes, molecular

gastronomy, and gourmet restaurants was mentioned. Tasting of the agar-agar plant gelling agent was also included in the presentation.

Medical Laboratory Technician students measured the blood sugar, cholesterol and hemoglobin values of all interested visitors using the Easy Life GCHb PLUS multifunctional device.



# FREE TESTS FOR TUBERCULOSIS WERE CARRIED OUT AT UMHAT 'DR. GEORGI STRANSKI' PLEVEN

In the period 16–20 September 2019, free tests for tuberculosis were conducted in the Department for Monitoring of Dispensary Patients with Lung Diseases at

the University Hospital "Dr. G. Stranski" - Pleven. The event was titled "Open Doors Week" and was part of the National Program for Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in the Republic of Bulgaria. All interested parties were offered screening for the risk of tuberculosis through a survey and consultations. Laboratory studies of people at risk were conducted.

# FREE CANCER SCREENINGS WERE CARRIED OUT IN BOTH UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS IN PLEVEN

The month of October began with a series of free examinations in the two university hospitals in Pleven - UMHAT "Dr. G. Stranski" and UMHAT "St. Marina". Both

hospitals participated in the special information and prevention campaign related to the World Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The initiative involved free prophylactic and diagnostic examinations for cervical cancer, breast cancer and colorectal cancer. The screening included people with relevant family history as well as those who wished to undergo prophylactic examinations.



### THE MINISTER OF HEALTHCARE RECEIVED A COMMEMORATIVE AWARD FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO MU-PLEVEN DURING THE XI EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON ROBOTIC SURGERY



The European Forum on Robotic Surgery was held from 26 to 28 September 2019. During the proceedings, the Minister of Healthcare of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Kiril Ananiev, was awarded a commemorative plaque for his outstanding contribution to the development of MU - Pleven as a center for robotic surgery. His award was presented by the Rector of MU - Pleven, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Chairman of the Scientific Committee of the XI European Congress of Robotic Gynecological Surgery.

Information: V.Dukova

### 'NO AMOUNT OF MONEY IS COMPARABLE TO THE SATISFACTION A DOCTOR FEELS WHEN HELPING A PATIENT!' A DIR.BG INTERVIEW WITH PROF. CAMRAN NEZHAT, THE FATHER

## OF LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY

Camran Nezhat, MD, FACOG, FACS is heralded as the 'Father of Modern-day Operative Laparoscopy'. He introduced the technique of operating on the monitor video laparoscopy and proved and published that even the most advanced pathologies can be successfully managed by minimally invasive surgery. Laparoscopic treatment of extensive endometriosis, laparoscopic bowel, bladder, ureter, diaphragm resection and reanastamosis, laparoscopic para aortic node dissection and radical hysterectomy, management of ovarian remnant, laparoscopic assisted myomectomy and laparoscopic sacral colpopexy and also laparoscopic repair of vesico vaginal and recto vaginal fistulas were all among some of the procedures performed for the first time by Dr. Nezhat and his team endoscopically. Dr.

Nezhat was one of the first physicians to start teaching robotic surgery in 2003, even before its approval by the FDA. He was one of the first physicians involved in the research and development of the Da Vinci® robot with renowned robotic pioneers Ajit Shah and Phil Green at Stanford Research Institute in the 1990's. Dr. Nezhat has performed more than 10,000 advanced laparoscopic surgeries, is co-author of six textbooks and hundreds of articles. He has trained thousands of surgeons who have attended his lectures, workshops and courses in endoscopic surgery. During the 11th European Congress on Robotic Surgery, organized by MU-Pleven in Sofia, Prof. Nezhat was one of the most distinguished guest lecturers in attendance.

- Prof. Nejat, let me take you back to your early years. How did you get into medicine?
- It all started with my parents. When I was a child, they sent me on a summer workshop to be taught by doctors, to learn from them. It all started from the moment when my mother was sick and the doctors saved her. As a token of gratitude, my father decided that I needed to become a doctor so that I could help people, as these doctors helped us when my mother was ill. Somehow what the doctors did for us, for our family, inspired me to turn to medicine.
  - Why did you choose surgery and why laparoscopy?
- People choose their own path. I chose mine to engage in surgery. When we talk about laparoscopy, I had a lot of trouble in the beginning. I was told that such an idea would not be possible. I told myself that this would be the last time someone would tell me how something was impossible. And I just did it. I sat down and seriously considered how to do it. The end result was that I invented video laparoscopy.
- How do you explain to the patients that you will operate on them in a new way, that you would apply a new surgical technique?
- Laparoscopic surgery is not as taxing to the body as conventional surgery, this is very important for patients.
- In the early and mid-70s, laparoscopy was used only for diagnostic and unimportant therapeutic purposes.
- Yes, that is indeed so. In the United States, there was a shortage of centers and surgeons qualified to participate in laparoscopic procedures. Until 1972, there were only approximately 30 centers where different kinds of

- laparoscopic procedures were performed. Today, however, laparoscopic procedures are considered standard even in the smallest hospitals.
- How do you see the future of minimally invasive operations?
- As very successful. I have always said that in any bodily cavity, endoscopic surgery is possible and usually preferable. The limiting factors are the skill and experience of the surgeon and the availability of appropriate equipment. I believe that many surgical procedures will become routine and will always be performed by laparoscopy. Technology is evolving very fast. Surgery in the next 10 to 20 years will be completely different. I expect more and more operations to be performed laparoscopically. In the future, I expect and believe that we will have procedures in which robots will perform operations almost entirely on their own, and surgeons will act as a moderator to ensure safety.
- What advice would you give to people who want to become surgeons?
- I always say that the pleasure of helping people is greater than any other. Helping other people is more fulfilling than any other good deed in the world. No amount of money is comparable to the satisfaction a doctor feels when helping a patient. Furthermore, the revolution in minimally invasive surgery over the last 30 years has made it so that about 30% of all major surgeries are now performed minimally invasively, which may prove to be a draw to both surgery and laparoscopic surgery in particular.

Interview adapted from: Dir.bg; Kalin Kamenov

### THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, TOMISLAV DONCHEV, BELIEVES MU-PLEVEN IS A VERY SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE OF THE MERGING OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE



On October 21, 2019, Deputy Prime Minister Tomislav Donchev visited Medical University - Pleven on occasion of the 45th anniversary of the founding of the university. The Rector of MU – Pleven, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov gave a lecture, which introduced the official guest, lecturers and students to the high-tech profile of the university and the development of 3D medicine, telemedicine and robotic surgery in particular. Professor Tomov emphasized the progress of the university in the most important project for the academic community - the establishment of a Center for Competence as part of EU project BG05M2OP001-1.002-0010-C01, titled



### cont. from p.6

"Center for competence in personalized medicine, 3D and telemedicine, robotic and minimally invasive surgery". At the end of his lecture, Professor Tomov presented the Deputy Prime Minister with the 45th anniversary plaque of MU-Pleven and one of the symbols of the university - a scarf presented to the graduates of the Faculty of Medicine.

The Deputy Prime Minister later addressed the growing prominence of the city of Pleven as an infrastructural center and emphasized that many of Pleven's achievements in the fields of medicine and academia could be linked directly to the successes of its medical university. He further stated: 'Here we have a unique model of an amazing combination of high science, high quality education, very high level healthcare as well as the opportunity for establishing whole new



industries. Others need to learn from you on how to successfully combine all these things together.' During his address, the Deputy Prime Minister noted that during the following fiscal year, the parliament's focus when formulating the budget would be on applied science and education as well as research and innovations. He also expressed the government's willingness to invest further in the medical education in Pleven, considering the exemplary results, achieved by MU-Pleven so far.

Information: V. Dukova

### A DOUBLE GRADUATION CEREMONY - FOR THE STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH CARE AND THE MEDICAL COLLEGE - WAS HELD AT MU-PLEVEN AS PART OF THE CELEBRATIONS FOR THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSITY

it humus!

On October 24, 2019, a double graduation ceremony of the 2019 Alumni of Health Professionals of the Faculty of Health Care and Medical College took place as part of the celebrations dedicated to the 45th anniversary of the Medical University of Pleven.

At the ceremony in Magnum Hall, the Medical College awarded diplomas to a total of 60 graduates with an average grade of Very good 4.99 in the specialties "X-ray laboratory assistant" (18); "Medical laboratory assistant" (13); "Social activities" (10) and "Assistant pharmacist" (19). The number of excellent grades in the college is 15 and all students who attained high scores were presented with commemorative plaques of Excellence. The valedictorian this year was Valya Borisova from the specialty "Social Activities" with a score of Excellent 5.93.

At the graduation ceremony, the Faculty of Health Care celebrated its graduating class of a total of 69 young bachelors. Of these, 45 are nurses and 24 are midwives with an average grade of Very Good 4.78. With the highest score of Excellent 5.84, the valedictorian of the 2019 FHC year was Nurse Anna Yancheva.

Almost all graduates of the class are already professionally employed in the health care system. Some of them are part of the health care specialists of some of the most demanding clinics - the Oncology Center, First Surgical Clinic or the Endocrinology Clinic. Others work in medical centers, nurseries and private hospitals in the city of Pleven or in their cities of origin. Many of them will continue their education in one of the Master's programs at MU - Pleven.

Information: V. Dukova





### DISTINGUISHED CARDIOLOGISTS DISCUSSED PROBLEMS OF THE CARDIO-VASCULAR SYSTEM DURING THE NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL ON 3RD OCTOBER

On October 3, 2019 the National Festival of Sports, Health and Longevity was held in Pleven. How to keep your heart healthy, what are the symptoms of the most dangerous cardiovascular diseases and when to visit a cardiologist were the main topics discussed by some of the most famous Bulgarian cardiologists. The festival started in the hall of the Military Club with a health panel, during which cardiovascular diseases were discussed. Among the guests and lecturers were: Prof. Dr. Arman Postadjian, Chairman of the Bulgarian Hypertension League and Head of the Cardiology Department at the University Hospital "St. Anna" - Sofia; Prof. Dr. Snezhana Tisheva, Head of the Clinic of Cardiology and Rheumatology at MU - Pleven and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nadia Stancheva from the Clinic of Cardiology at MU -Pleven.











### ВИ КАНЯТ ДА ПРИСЪСТВАТЕ

На 3 октомври 2019 /четвъртък/ от 10.00 ч., зала във Вое

Национален фестивал ПРАЗНИК НА СПОРТА, ЗДРАВЕТО И ДЪЛГОЛЕТИЕТО

a от създаването на СК "Спартакисти", гр. Пл

### ПРОГРАМА

### THE 17TH NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE FOR THE STUDENTS AND LECTURERS OF MEDICAL COLLEGE PLEVEN WAS HELD ON 24/25TH OCTOBER, 2019

The seventeenth national scientific conference for students and lecturers, organized by the Medical College at the Medical University - Pleven, was held during the celebrations of the 45th anniversary of the Medical University - Pleven. The tradition of celebrating the holiday, within the conference itself, this year was accompanied by various scientific initiatives - meetings, discussions and lectures of prominent university professors from the country and from MU-Pleven.

The forum took place on October 24 and 25, 2019 in the halls of the Rectorate 2 building. The opening was on October 24, 2019, in the Ambroise Pare hall of TELEC at MU - Pleven. The Director of the Medical College at MU - Pleven, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Evgenia

Barzashka, MD, welcomed the participants. On behalf of the Rector of MU - Pleven, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, MD and the academic leadership of MU-Pleven, a welcoming address was given by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galya Stavreva, Vice-Rector for Research at the University.

The Seventeenth National Scientific Session was attended by a total of 106 students and lecturers from the following specialties: "Medical Laboratory Assistant", "X-ray Laboratory Assistant", "Assistant Pharmacist" and "Social Activities" of the Medical College at MU - Pleven; Department of Physical Medicine, Rehabilitation and Sports of MU - Pleven as well as students and lecturers from other higher education institutions in the country: Medical University - Sofia; Yordanka Filaretova Medical College at the Medical University -Sofia; Medical University - Plovdiv; Medical College at the Medical University -Plovdiv; University of Veliko Tarnovo St. St. Cyril and Methodius; University of Shumen Episkop Konstantin Preslavski.

During the two days of the forum, 33 reports were presented, divided into three sections: Medical-diagnostic activities, Social and pharmaceutical activities and VARIA. At the end of the scientific session, the participants left with ideas on how to develop their knowledge and research experience in medical practice and social activities and how to work effectively to have more successful and in line with national and European standards practices.





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